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Security Council

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Resolution 2222 (2015)

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The Security Council

Bearing in mind its primary responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security, and underlining the importance of taking measures aimed at conflict prevention and resolution,

Reaffirming its resolutions 1265 (1999), 1296 (2000), 1674 (2006) and 1894 (2009) on the protection of civilians in armed conflict and its resolution 1738 (2006) on the protection of journalists, media professionals and associated personnel in armed conflicts as well as other relevant resolutions and presidential statements,

Reaffirming its commitment to the Purposes of the Charter of the United Nations as set out in Article 1 (1-4) of the Charter, and to the Principles of the Charter as set out in Article 2 (1-7) of the Charter, including its commitment to the principles of the political independence, sovereign equality and territorial integrity of all States, and respect for the sovereignty of all States,

Recalling the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, in particular the Third Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 on the treatment of prisoners of war, and the Additional Protocols of 8 June 1977, in particular article 79 of the Additional Protocol I regarding the protection of journalists engaged in dangerous professional missions in areas of armed conflict,

Recognizing that the work of journalists, media professionals, and associated personnel often puts them at specific risk of intimidation, harassment and violence in situations of armed conflict,

Reaffirming that parties to an armed conflict bear the primary responsibility to take all feasible steps to ensure the protection of affected civilians, including those who exercise their right to freedom of expression by seeking, receiving and disseminating information by different means, online as well as offline, in accordance with Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,

Recognizing the important role of international humanitarian law, and international human rights law as applicable, in protecting journalists, media professionals and associated personnel in armed conflicts,

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Further recognizing that States bear the primary responsibility to respect and ensure the human rights of their citizens, as well as individuals within their territory as provided for by relevant international law,

Recalling the right to freedom of expression reflected in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the General Assembly in 1948 ("the Universal Declaration"), and *recalling* also the right to freedom of expression in Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights adopted by the General Assembly in 1966 ("ICCPR") and that any restrictions thereon shall only be such as are provided by law and are necessary on the grounds set out in paragraph 3 of Article 19 of the ICCPR,

Deeply concerned at the frequency of acts of violence in many parts of the world against journalists, media professionals, and associated personnel in armed conflict, in particular deliberate attacks in violation of international humanitarian law,

Emphasizing that there are existing prohibitions under international humanitarian law against attacks intentionally directed against civilians, as such, which in situations of armed conflict constitute war crimes, and recalling the need for States to end impunity for such criminal acts,

Bearing in mind that impunity for crimes committed against journalists, media professionals and associated personnel in armed conflict remains a significant challenge to their protection and that ensuring accountability for crimes committed against them is a key element in preventing future attacks,

Recognizing that journalists, media professionals and associated personnel can play an important role in protection of civilians and conflict prevention by acting as an early warning mechanism in identifying and reporting potential situations that could result in genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity,

Reaffirming its condemnation of all incitements to violence against civilians in situations of armed conflict, and condemning the use of the media to incite violence, genocide, crimes against humanity and other serious violations of international humanitarian law,

Recalling that States Parties to the Geneva Conventions have an obligation to search for persons alleged to have committed, or to have ordered to be committed a grave breach of these Conventions, and an obligation to try them before their own courts, regardless of their nationality, or may hand them over for trial to another concerned State provided this State has made out prima facie case against the said persons,

Further recalling the responsibility of all Member States to comply with their respective obligations to end impunity and to investigate and prosecute those responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes or other serious violations of international humanitarian law and noting that the fight against impunity for the most serious crimes of international concern committed against civilians has been strengthened through the work on and prosecution of these crimes by the International Criminal Court, in accordance with the principle of complementarity to national criminal jurisdictions as set out in the Rome Statute, ad hoc and mixed tribunals and specialized chambers in national tribunals,

Expressing deep concern at the growing threat to the safety of journalists, media professionals, and associated personnel posed by terrorist groups and *strongly condemning* incidents of killings, kidnapping and hostage taking committed by terrorist groups for any purpose, including raising funds or gaining political concessions, and expressing its determination to prevent kidnapping and hostage taking committed by terrorist groups and to secure the safe release of hostages without ransom payments or political concessions, in accordance with applicable international law,

Stressing the contribution that peacekeeping operations and special political missions, where mandated, can make to international efforts to promote and protect human rights, and the protection of civilians, including journalists, media professionals, and associated personnel including through monitoring and reporting on violations and abuses as well as providing support for national governments' efforts to promote and protect human rights, and in order to strengthen the fight against impunity for crimes committed against civilians, including journalists, media professionals, and associated personnel,

Recognizing the importance of a comprehensive, coherent and action-oriented approach, including in early planning, of protection of civilians in situations of armed conflict. *Stressing*, in this regard, the need to adopt a broad strategy of conflict prevention, which addresses the root causes of armed conflict in a comprehensive manner in order to enhance the protection of civilians on a long-term basis, including by promoting sustainable development, poverty eradication, national reconciliation, good governance, democracy, the rule of law and respect for and protection of human rights,

Acknowledging the important role that regional and sub-regional organisations can play in ensuring the protection of journalists, media professionals, and associated personnel in armed conflicts and the importance of effective co-operation between the United Nations and those organizations,

Further acknowledging the specific risks faced by women journalists, media professionals and associated personnel in conduct of their work, and underlining in this context the importance of considering the gender dimension of measures to address their safety in situations of armed conflict,

Recognizing that the consideration of the issue of protection of journalists in armed conflict by the Security Council is based on the urgency and importance of this issue, and recognizing the valuable role that the Secretary-General can play in providing more information on this issue,

1. *Condemns* all violations and abuses committed against journalists, media professionals and associated personnel in situations of armed conflict, and *calls upon* all parties to armed conflict to bring an end to such practices;

2. *Affirms* that the work of a free, independent and impartial media constitutes one of the essential foundations of a democratic society, and thereby can contribute to the protection of civilians;

3. *Recalls* in this regard that journalists, media professionals and associated personnel engaged in dangerous professional missions in areas of armed conflict shall be considered as civilians and shall be respected and protected as such, provided that they take no action adversely affecting their status as civilians. This is

without prejudice to the right of war correspondents accredited to the armed forces to the status of prisoners of war provided for in article 4.A.4 of the Third Geneva Convention;

4. *Strongly condemns* the prevailing impunity for violations and abuses committed against journalists, media professionals and associated personnel in situations of armed conflict, which in turn may contribute to the recurrence of these acts;

5. *Emphasizes* the responsibility of States to comply with the relevant obligations under international law to end impunity and to prosecute those responsible for serious violations of international humanitarian law;

6. *Urges* Member States to take appropriate steps to ensure accountability for crimes committed against journalists, media professionals and associated personnel in situations of armed conflict and through the conduct of impartial, independent and effective investigations within their jurisdiction and to bring perpetrators of such crimes to justice;

7. *Recalls its demand* that all parties to an armed conflict comply fully with the obligations applicable to them under international law related to the protection of civilians in armed conflict, including journalists, media professionals and associated personnel;

8. *Urges* the immediate and unconditional release of journalists, media professionals and associated personnel who have been kidnapped or taken as hostages, in situations of armed conflict;

9. *Urges* all parties involved in situations of armed conflict to respect the professional independence and rights of journalists, media professionals and associated personnel as civilians;

10. *Recalls also* that media equipment and installations constitute civilian objects, and in this respect shall not be the object of attack or of reprisals, unless they are military objectives;

11. *Recognizes* the important role that education and training in international humanitarian law can play in supporting efforts to halt and prevent attacks against civilians affected by armed conflict, including journalists, media professionals and associated personnel;

12. *Affirms* that United Nations peacekeeping and special political missions, where appropriate should include in their mandated reporting information on specific acts of violence against journalists, media professionals and associated personnel in situation of armed conflict;

13. *Urges* all parties to armed conflict to do their utmost to prevent violations of international humanitarian law against civilians, including journalists, media professionals and associated personnel;

14. *Calls upon* Member States to create and maintain, in law and in practice, a safe and enabling environment for journalists, media professionals and associated personnel to perform their work independently and without undue interference in situations of armed conflict;

15. *Stresses* the need to ensure better cooperation and coordination at the international level, including among the United Nations and relevant international regional and sub-regional organizations, including through technical assistance and capacity-building, with regard to promoting and ensuring the safety of journalists, media professionals and associated personnel in armed conflicts;

16. *Encourages* the United Nations and regional and sub-regional organizations to share expertise on good practices and lessons learned on protection of journalists, media professionals and associated personnel in armed conflict and, in close co-operation, to enhance the coherent and effective implementation of applicable international humanitarian law and relevant Security Council resolutions including those on protection of journalist, media professionals and associated personnel in situations of the armed conflict;

17. *Invites* States which have not yet done so to consider becoming parties to the additional Protocols I and II of 1977 to the Geneva Conventions at the earliest possible date;

18. *Reaffirms* that it will continue to address the issue of protection of journalists in armed conflict;

19. *Requests* the Secretary-General to include consistently as a sub-item in his reports on the protection of civilians in armed conflict the issue of the safety and security of journalists, media professionals and associated personnel, including the existence of measures to protect such individuals facing an imminent threat, and to ensure that information on attacks and violence against journalists, media professionals and associated personnel and preventative actions taken to prevent such incidents is included as a specific aspect in relevant country specific reports.